C O N F I D E N T I A L

~~12/15/68~~
12/15/68 - Taped interview with Philip Geraci III from before 11 2.m. to about 3 p.m. 12/14/68 at home of and in presence of his family attorney, Mrs. Lillian Cohen (wife of Judge Trenty, 2127 Jefferson Ave., New Orleans.

This interview was arranged by Mrs. Cohen after I showed her some of my files and suggested an informal interview might eliminate the need for a formal one - and was made in Philip's interest. Mrs. Geraci was also there.

During the interview, I turned off the recorder whenever anyone asked. I do not recall Philip Geraci ever asking for it. There must be more than an hour of it on tape. This is to serve until that is transcribed. The second cartridge was in some way defective. When I reached that point, I showed it to Mrs. Cohen, marked it so she could see it, and inserted another.

In general, I think Philip was truthful. If there are major lies, he fooled me.

His relations with Bringuier, especially in regard to time, are as I had concluded from the other evidence, including Philip's and Vance Blalock's testimony and FBI and Secret Service reports. Philip saw Oswald at Bringuier's much earlier than the 8/5/63 date to which Bringuier testified, perhaps as early as 7/5/63 (for which he promised me a Xerox of the receipt his father had promised and hadn't sent) and no later than about the middle of July. Thus, it is clear that Bringuier lied, perhaps perjured himself.

This was not Philip's first visit to Carlos Bringuier's, was his 4th or 5th. The first was right after school was out. It was abuut the third on which he got the bonds (receipt dated 6/21/63). I showed them all a Xerox of a 11 the documents, including this, and offered copies of any I had not already provided. Philip did see Bringuier after getting out of Mandeville z(but says not with Dione Turner as she had told me). He is not certain that on the occasion he met Oswald he was giving Carlos money ($10.50). I think his testimony is explicit on this, and I am certain Blalock's is. My impression is that he was trying to protect Bringuier, whom he seems to regard as a friend, though I skirted this, not to confront him with the temptation. After questioning him at some length and listening to him over and over - and hearing him say he was present when the FBI interviewed Blalock - I am satisfied the date was 7/5/63. But, any date in July entirely destroys Bringuier's explanations, which require a date after the Davis-CDM camp broke up from his "explanations" of his "suspicions".

In essence, Philip said substantially what my earlier memos say of his Bringuier relationship. He denies Carlos had anything to do with his going to the "Silver Dollar" (he says the place that ignored his age and served him drinks is the "Sho Bar"). He says he saw Oswald only this once, was never at any Cuban camp and knew nothing of any paramilitary activities by Bringuier.

He learned about Panther Press from Field & Stream and got (and
* still has) some of the literature. The Geracis are to get back from

the Jefferson Parish sheriff's office what they gave it in 1965.

Says he is not gay but, in talking of the affair at the Silver Dollar, volunteered he had lied and acknowledged he was aware of what was going on and permitted it out of curiosity. Says didn't like it.

Not certain the man who picked him up is Mario Bermudez (they have slip of paper they are to provide on this) but gave a good description of him save for the mustache. Says Mario had white stationwagon and quoted him as saying he had a purplish car (which is what Raul said he used). I had no Bermudez picture with me. The mother, who, with the father, had been specific in saying the "children" had told them this was Mario Bermudez, here said she got the idea from me. Despite her apparent sincerity on some points, I wondered if she had made some kind of "deal" here, as she had with Liebeler.

He was unequivocal in repeating his testimony, that while he was present, there was no offer by LHO to "train guerrillas" - nor anything even remotely suggesting it. This is also what Blalock told the government. He says he was in the store when LHO arrived and was still in it when Oswald left.

He told of a strange incident his mother confirmed, that at 2 a.m. the night David Ferrie died, meaning the early morning after it, he was awakened by Sgt. Borne of Jefferson Parish Sheriff's office, who had worked on his juvenile case, taken from Orleans into Jefferson Parish to the home of an uncle, and severely interrogated about Ferrie (he had been in Civil Air Patrol also but in 1962-3, and was looking for a proper shirt the first time he went to Bringuier's). He was told this questioning was for both parishes, specifically that it was for Garrison and would keep Garrison from troubling Philip. He was reminded that "20 people" had met mysterious deaths - frightened - and kept in Jefferson Parish a week. He was reinterviewed on tape and told a copy would be given to Garrison's office. Neither Sciambra nor Ivon know anything of this. Why anyone would question Philip about Ferris is not clear. I suggest the possibility something else was sought.

As there is no apparent reason for questioning Philip about Ferrie, there is even less for any mention of Dione. The least likely thing is that this very uneffeminate young woman is part of a sex ring. It may be that this was given as a reason so the officers' interest in her was disguised. Mrs. Geraci confirmed this, as she did all of Philip's story on that questioning. Part of it came from her. There would seem to be no reason for Mrs. Geraci (or Philip either) to involve Dione for no apparent reason, for there is no involvement of any kind of a sex ring of young girls in the story of the assassination. However, it does seem clear that Philip was questioned about Dione. I think when I return I should pursue this further with the Geracis, to see if it is possible to pinpoint the real reason for terrifying and questioning Philip at all and about Dione. One possible explanation for questioning Philip is "Mario". Dione also knew all about this. When she learned I had questioned Raul, one of the first things she asked me is, "Did he mention Mario?" And why did the Jefferson Parish authorities pretend to be working for the Orleans Parish District Attorney? Who was really with Borne? Could it have been someone not with that Parish, perhaps a federal officer?

They told Philip Gerace and/or his mother that they didn't believe him, that he was gay, that he had to be because of CAP/Ferrie (his leader was a woman, a major) and the second officer said he knew because he had been in the CAP with Ferrie (O'Sullivan?). They also told him Dione

was part of a "sex ring". On this, he said he had tried to "make" her and hadn't been able to and that Raul Navas had told him he had but Philip does not believe Raul, whom he called a liar. He thinks Raul himself is gay. He says he knows of no girl dates Raul has.

Philip said Bill Dwyer was in town and offered to put me in touch with him and other CAP cadet members. I saw no immediate purpose in this. He said if he thinks of anything else, he'll make notes, now that he knows my interests. He is just out of the army on a hardship discharge. I took two 8mm pictures of him. He is thinner than the pictures of him before he went into the army.

The Michaud "bombing" is not as in the Jefferson report, which I had and showed Mrs. Cohen. It was not his idea but was Lafontaines.

There was a Philip Geraci who worked for J. B. Vela, but he is not Philip. They have had problems over the older, gay, Philip Geraci. If this one at Vela's was not the gay, then there were four Philip Geracis in the New Orleans area not counting a possible paternal grandfather. Philip had a way of knowing of this man because of involvements with a Vespa motor scooter, of which Mrs. Cohen has some knowledge.

He is willing to be interviewed by the DA's office if necessary. He asked me what to do if the FBI, etc., was to interview him. I told him to take down identification and call his lawyer, to talk only in her presence. She was out of the room but on her return said the same thing.

We all agreed there had to have been an earlier FBI interview than that of 11/29/63. Mrs. Geraci recalled an earlier call by witnesses she asked to be present and by the absence of her husband, who was hunting that weekend.